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ABSTRACT

A report is given on a research study designed to improve evaluation of the performance of student teachers. The focus of this study was to isolate general categories of critical tasks perceived to be the most important by school personnel and to determine if groups of school personnel placed the same relative degree of importance on each of the tasks selected for the purpose of evaluating student teaching. Participants in this study were elementary and secondary school cooperating teachers, student teachers, school administrators, and college teacher educators. Twenty-three tasks performed by student teachers were ranked by participants in order of importance. Results indicated a high degree of agreement on task importance. Results of this research are presented in tabular form. (JD)

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A TAXONOMY OF CRITICAL TASKS FOR EVALUATING STUDENT TEACHING

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Washington, D.C.

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A TAXONOMY OF CRITICAL TASKS FOR EVALUATING STUDENT TEACHING

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FOREWARD

It is with considerable pleasure that ATE assists in sponsoring this monograph relating to the evaluation of student teaching. A student of the history of education will be aware that during most of ATE's sixty years of service to teacher education, the Association confined its efforts almost exclusively to the field of student teaching.

Although the efforts of ATE cover the entire panorama of teacher education, a considerable amount of its efforts are still devoted to the improvement of field experiences, including student teaching.

The monograph, prepared by Dr. Ray Kuehl, is a carefully done and a very readable report of his development of a "Taxonomy of Critical Tasks for Evaluating Student Teaching".

We at ATE feel that with the increasing importance of student teaching, this is a timely and vital publication and are pleased to assist in bringing it to the attention of teacher educators everywhere.

Robert J. Stevenson, Executive Director
Association of Teacher Educators
Washington, D.C.

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A TAXONOMY OF CRITICAL TASKS FOR EVALUATING STUDENT TEACHING

INTRODUCTION

Most of the literature in teacher education and surveys involving teacher educators reveal positive support for student teaching as an integral component in the undergraduate program of studies in teacher education. It is generally agreed that student teaching is a complex experience that requires systematic and continuous evaluation.

Evaluation of student teaching is a challenge to college/university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and student teachers. It is influenced in many ways by forces in the classroom, the school and the community, and by those who provide the supervision.

Studies on teacher effectiveness have been summarized and reviewed periodically since 1926. For over 50 years research has been conducted in an effort to determine what it is that "good" teachers do that makes their teaching more effective. Good teaching is very difficult to define because the term "good" is so value-laden. Cooper (10) states, "While it remains difficult to agree on what 'good' teaching is, 'effective' teaching can be demonstrated. The effective teacher is one who is able to bring about intended learning outcomes." Research about teacher effectiveness is inconclusive. Smith (21) concluded, "There are few, if any, skills of teaching whose superiority can be counted as empirically established." 1

Likewise, what is it that "good" student teachers should do to make their teaching more effective? According to Davis (11), "Evaluation in student teaching should be made in terms of clearly defined purposes focused on developing basic teaching competencies." Davis (11) further states, "Uncertainty about the nature and processes of student teacher evaluation suggests that criteria based on evidence from quality research must be sought and used as a basis for evaluating student teaching." Therefore, additional research seems necessary in an effort to isolate the most important tasks for the purpose of evaluating student teaching.

Purpose of Student Teaching. The primary purpose of student teaching is to provide a planned, carefully supervised learning experience which allows the student teacher to demonstrate resourcefulness as a teacher in a real school setting. Since the primary purpose of student teaching is to provide a quality learning experience, it is imperative that the progress of the student teacher toward this purpose be evaluated.

Evaluation of Student Teaching. Evaluation of student teaching is a difficult task, at best, and the entire process continues to be a matter of concern to teacher educators. Equally difficult is the identification of teaching tasks to be evaluated. Examination of student teaching evaluation instruments reveals any number of general categories and subcategories. Since the literature is replete with a wide variety of teaching tasks, there appears to be little agreement among teacher educators regarding the general categories and subcategories to be evaluated. The scope of evaluation should, in part, be determined by the pre-student teaching preparation program and the basic philosophy of the teacher education institution regarding evaluation.

The initial step in evaluation of student teaching is to determine what critical tasks are believed to be the most important in the evaluation process. Generally, some
2 type of evaluation instrument is used.

According to Bennie (3), the most desirable instrument for the evaluation of student teaching is one that includes general teaching tasks and appropriate subtasks with a scale indicating several levels of competency. The evaluation instrument should focus on the most important teaching tasks associated with student teaching. The final evaluation should distinguish between the competent and the less than competent student teacher to aid employing school officials in the screening and selection process.

Screening and Selection of Candidates for Employment. Employing school officials usually consider the instrument used to evaluate student teaching to be one of the most important documents in the credentials of persons seeking a teaching position. In the teacher selection process it is essential that school officials have reliable information about novice candidates and their qualifications for teaching. A checklist of teaching tasks on the student teaching evaluation instrument is useful in the initial screening and selection process. The student teaching evaluation instrument is an invaluable document for employing school officials.

The student teaching evaluation included in the credentials is interpreted by many employing school officials as a prediction of teaching success regardless of the well known lack of consistency between measures of student teaching performance and measures of success as a beginning teacher. This inconsistency seems to suggest that there is a need to isolate the most important critical tasks for evaluating student teaching.

If the best qualified candidate is to be selected for a teaching position, it is imperative that a fair and accurate evaluation of student teaching be provided by the recommending institution. Identification of critical tasks for evaluating student teaching is essential.

Need for Study. Instruments which have been used for evaluating student teaching vary in format, number of items, and type of evaluation scale. A large number of instruments with a variety of general categories and subcategories were found through examination of instruments currently in use and a review of related literature. The general categories and subcategories associated with most of the instruments used to evaluate student teaching were probably determined by judgments made on the basis of either subjective requirements or subjective criteria or both. There is a need for additional study to systematically isolate the most important teaching tasks for evaluating student teaching. Part of the difficulty in isolating teaching tasks is due to several facts: 1) teaching means many different things to evaluators and evaluatees, 2) the teaching act varies from student teacher to student teacher and from situation to situation.

Purpose of Study. The purpose of this study was two-fold: 1) to isolate those general categories of critical tasks believed to be the most important as perceived by teacher educators and student teachers and 2) to determine if groups of school personnel place the same relative degree of importance on critical tasks.

Hypothesis. This hypothesis, stated in the operational null form, gave direction to the analysis of data: All of the groups of school personnel place the same relative degree of importance on each of the 23 critical tasks for evaluating student teaching.

The same hypothesis is appropriate for each of the 23 critical tasks associated with the survey instrument.

PROCEDURES

Instrument Construction. The survey was divided into two parts. Part I of the survey was completed during the spring semester of the 1976-77 academic year. Part II of the survey was conducted during the spring semester of the 1977-78 academic year.

Two previous studies were relevant to Part I of this survey. In the first study, the New York Department of Education was interested in designing a "Model for Developing a State System for Managing Performance Programs" (7). The study was conducted by The Educational Assessment System Corporation (EASC).

Data were gathered from the student teacher evaluation forms used in 89 New York State institutions of higher education with approved programs in teacher education. The 89 forms were analyzed to determine the total number of discrete evaluation items represented. A total of 3,191 items were identified and 3,015 were coded according to The Educational Assessment System.

4 To construct the Representative College Student Teacher Evaluation Form (REF), it was necessary for EASC to complete two independent analyses of the 3,015 items. Fifty-six subcategories showed a frequency ranging from 1 to as many as 500 times on the 89 forms.

Based on two separate analyses, 10 general categories and 50 subcategories were selected to constitute the Representative College Student Teacher Evaluation Form.

In the second relevant study, the University of Houston conducted a survey titled "Designing the Career-Long Preparation of Teachers" (14). The basic purpose of the study was to identify teaching behaviors and skills. Generic teaching skills identified at the University of Houston included 11 general categories and 33 subcategories.

This investigator abstracted general categories for evaluating student teaching from evaluation instruments and related literature. The 14 coordinators of student teaching at the University of Northern Iowa served as a jury to assist in selecting items to be included in the survey instrument used in Part I of the study. On the basis of the New York state study, the University of Houston study, and the 34 items identified

by the UNI jury, a 55 item instrument was developed for use in Part I of the study.

During the 1977 spring semester, data in Part I of the study were gathered from 420 student teachers, elementary and secondary cooperating teachers, elementary, secondary and post-secondary administrators, and college/university supervisors of student teaching. The respondents were asked to indicate the relative degree of importance they placed on each of the 55 items using a five-point Likert-type scale (5 very high and 1 very low).

The obtained data provided a composite mean for each general category. The mean was used for rank ordering the items and for generating a factor matrix. Thirty of the 55 item means were equal to or higher than the composite mean. The Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix generated 10 factors. A total of 30 items met the 0.50 factor loading criterion, loaded on 10 factors, and accounted for 97.9 percent of the identifiable common variance. Thirteen of the items that ranked among the top 30 failed to load on a factor. The failure of 13 items with a high rank order to load on one of the 10 factors was not interpreted to mean that they were viewed as unimportant by the respondents. Failure to load on a factor was merely a result of their failure to covary with other variables.

A study conducted by the Institute for Staff Development (12) in Miami was useful to this investigator when selecting critical tasks to be included in the instrument for Part II of this study. The study conducted by the Institute for Staff Development focused on the identification of, through systematic task analysis, the specific competencies associated with classroom instruction. The Institute identified 18 educational categories and 97 specific competencies.

Using the 18 classroom instructional categories identified by the Institute for Staff Development as a model, this investigator categorized the 10 factors and 13 specific items perceived to be important by the respondents who participated in Part I of the study. In the judgment of this investigator, several of the 10 factors identified in Part I of the study were different from the Institute for Staff Development categories; therefore, five additional general categories were generated resulting in a 23-item survey instrument for use in Part II of the study.

Population. The data for Part II of the study were gathered from six groups of school personnel: 204 early childhood, elementary, and middle school cooperating teachers, and student teachers, 2) 82 special education cooperating teachers and stu-

dent teachers, 3) 84 special area cooperating teachers and student teachers, 4) 171 secondary and post-secondary cooperating teachers and student teachers, 5) 151 elementary and secondary school principals, personnel directors, and superintendents, and 6) 88 post-secondary administrators and college/university supervisors from 90 local education agencies whose enrollment ranged from less that 500 to over 38,000 pupils, 10 area education agencies, 10 area community colleges, 7 post-secondary public and private institutions in Iowa, and 18 teacher education institutions outside the state of Iowa. A total of 780 individuals responded to the survey during the 1978 spring semester. The respondents were requested to indicate the degree of importance they placed on each of the 23 critical tasks using the same five-point Likert-type scale used in Part I of the study.

TREATMENT OF DATA

Based on a five-point scale (5 very high degree of importance and 1 very low degree of importance) a composite mean and a mean for each of the 23 critical tasks were generated for each of the six groups of school personnel included in the survey.

The composite mean and the group means obtained for each critical task were used to rank order the 23 critical tasks according to the six groups of school personnel who responded to the survey.

The analysis of frequencies using chi-square is a general method for testing hypotheses about frequencies classified into categories. The chi-square analysis yields the probability that the obtained value is due to chance. For purpose of this study, the value of chi-square was considered significant if the probability that it occurred by chance was 0.05 or less. If the associated probability is as small as 0.05, this investigator will reject the hypothesis that all groups of school personnel placed the same relative degree of importance on each of the 23 critical tasks.

To test the hypothesis, contingency tables (3 X 3) were construced to study the association among the groups of school personnel and the rating scale. The 3 X 3, 9-cell, tables were constructed by regrouping the six original groups into three groups by merging groups 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and 5 and 6. The original five-point scale (5 very high and 1 very low) was reduced to a three-point scale by combining 1 with 2 and combining 4 with 5.

FINDINGS

The obtained data provided a composite mean and group means for each of the 23 critical tasks for rank ordering purposes. Chart 1 reveals that the composite means range from a high of 4.645 for critical task number 13: "Use of Management/Discipline Strategies" to a low of 3.483 for critical task number one: "Knowledge of District Educational Philosophy and Instructional Policies." The chart further reveals the mean and rank order of each critical task by groups of school personnel and the range of means by rows and columns.

There is considerable consistency among the groups of school personnel for each of the 23 critical tasks. For example, critical task number 13: "Use of Management/Discipline Strategies" is ranked first by four of the six groups, third by one group and fourth by one group. Likewise, critical task number one: "Knowledge of District Educational Philosophy and Instructional Policies" is ranked twenty-third by five of the six groups and twenty-second by one group. Further examination of the chart reveals the same general pattern of consistency among the groups of school personnel.

The composite means obtained for the 23 critical tasks ranged from 4.645 to 3.483, a difference of 1.162. The composite means for the 13 critical tasks that ranked among the highest (between 5.00 and 4.01) ranged from 4.645 to 4.145, a difference of 0.500; the composite means for 10 critical tasks that ranked from 14 to 23 (between 4.00 and 3.01) ranged from 3.971 to 3.483, a difference of 0.428.

The contingency tables (1 - 23) that follow show the frequencies in each of the nine cells, the row totals (based on the reduced scale from 5 point to 3 point) and column totals (according to the merged groups of school personnel).

CHART 1

Rank Order of Critical Tasks Based on Composite Means and Group Means

Task	Composite	Rank	Group No. 1	Rank	Group No. 2	Rank	Group No. 3	Rank	Group No. 4	Rank	Group No. 5	Rank	Group No. 6	Rank	Range
	N = 780		N = 204		N = 82		N = 171		N = 84		N = 151		N = 88		
1	3.483	23	3.456	23	3.110	23	3.433	23	3.381	23	3.722	22	3.682	23	0.612
2	3.676	21	3.527	22	3.524	22	3.573	21	3.607	21	3.914	16.5	3.784	21	0.390
3	3.727	20	3.691	21	3.634	20.5	3.643	20	3.738	18.5	3.914	16.5	3.727	22	0.280
4	3.813	19	3.868	18	3.671	19	3.655	18.5	3.702	20	4.020	13	3.875	19	0.349
5	4.464	6	4.358	8	4.402	10	4.544	2	4.607	3	4.404	8	4.580	7	0.205
6	3.947	15	3.897	16	3.988	16	4.000	14	3.821	17	3.881	18	4.159	14	0.338
7	4.313	9	4.162	13	4.427	8	4.263	9	4.143	10	4.430	6	4.614	6	0.471
8	4.559	2	4.596	2	4.793	2	4.427	5	4.417	5	4.536	3	4.759	1	0.383
9	3.971	14	3.975	14	4.073	14	3.924	15	3.976	13	3.861	20	4.136	16.5	0.275
10	4.145	13	4.230	11	4.524	2	4.029	13	3.917	14	4.086	12	4.136	16.5	0.607
11	4.241	10	4.289	9	4.512	7	4.082	12	4.083	12	4.185	10	4.432	9	0.430
12	4.386	8	4.412	6.5	4.622	3	4.327	8	4.274	7	4.344	9	4.398	10	0.348
13	4.645	1	4.701	1	4.854	1	4.808	1	4.464	3	4.603	1	4.636	4	0.390
14	4.168	11	4.211	12	4.085	13	4.111	11	4.095	11	4.179	11	4.307	11	0.212
15	3.890	17	3.828	19	4.012	15	3.801	17	3.738	18.5	3.927	15	4.170	13	0.432
16	4.400	7	4.412	6.5	4.146	12	4.421	6	4.238	8	4.437	5	4.659	3	0.513
17	4.529	3	4.539	4	4.415	9	4.491	4	4.452	4	4.576	2	4.682	2	0.267
18	3.896	16	3.887	17	3.805	18	3.836	16	3.833	16	3.874	19	4.216	12	0.411
19	4.490	5	4.544	3	4.549	5	4.363	7	4.357	6	4.523	4	4.625	5	0.268
20	3.659	22	3.789	20	3.634	20.5	3.526	22	3.500	22	3.576	23	3.932	18	0.432
21	3.833	18	3.966	15	3.915	17	3.655	18.5	3.857	15	3.781	21	3.864	20	0.311
22	4.164	12	4.279	10	4.232	11	4.164	10	4.167	9	3.980	14	4.148	15	0.187
23	4.495	4	4.490	5	4.585	4	4.520	3	4.500	2	4.424	7	4.489	8	0.161
Range	1.162		1.245		1.744		1.175		1.226		1.027		1.068		

Group No. 1. . . . . Early Childhood, Elementary and middle school cooperating teachers and student teachers
No. 2. . . . . Special education cooperating teachers
No. 3. . . . . Secondary and post-secondary cooperating teachers and student teachers
Group No. 4. . . Special area cooperating teachers & student teachers
No. 5. . . Elementary/secondary administrators
No. 6. . . Post-secondary administrators

The title of TABLE 1 "Contingency Table Showing Relationship Among the Three Groups of School Personnel and a Three-Point Rating Scale" is the same title for each of the subsequent tables 2 through 23; therefore, the title is not repeated for each table.

The row totals at the right hand margin in TABLE 1 show that 98 respondents placed a very low relative degree of importance (1 or 2 on a five-point scale) on critical task one; 306 perceived critical task one as being important (3), and 376 placed a high degree or very high relative degree of importance (4 or 5) on critical task one. The proportions in these three categories are 98/780, 306/780, and 376/780. These proportions are the probabilities that any one of the respondents selected at random from the sample of 780, would perceive critical task one as having a relative degree of importance of 1/2, 3 or 4/5. The column totals at the bottom of the table show that 286 of the respondents are early childhood, special education, elementary or middle school cooperating teachers, and student teachers; 255 of the respondents are special area, secondary and post secondary cooperating teachers, and student teachers; and 239 of the respondents are elementary, secondary, and post-secondary administrators. The proportions in these three categories are 286/780, 255/780, and 239/780. These proportions are the probabilities that one of the respondents selected at random from the sample of 780 would be an early childhood, elementary, special education, middle school cooperating teacher, or student teacher; or an elementary, secondary, or post-secondary administrator.

Each of the subsequent contingency tables should be interpreted in the same manner.

TABLE 1

Contingency Table Showing Relationship Among Three Groups of School Personnel and a Three-Point Rating Scale

Critical Task No. 1: Knowledge of District Educational Philosophy and Instructional Policies (23)*

Scale[1]	Group[2] 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	51	31	16	98
I	111	118	77	306
H/VH	124	106	146	376
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 31.09 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.0001; therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. It appears that the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary administrators (group 3) placed a higher relative degree of importance on critical task number one than did either of the other two groups of school personnel.

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1. Scale

   VL/L . . . . . Very low/low degree of importance

   I . . . . . Important

   H/VH . . . . . High/very high degree of importance

2. Groups

   1. Early childhood, elementary, special education, middle school cooperating teachers and student teachers

   2. Special area, secondary, post-secondary cooperating teachers, and student teachers

   3. Elementary, secondary, and post-secondary administrators

*Rank order based on composite mean

TABLE 2

Critical Task No. 2: Knowledge of District Instructional Goals and Objectives (21)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	28	23	10	61
I	109	96	72	277
H/VH	149	136	157	442
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 13.74 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.008; therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. It seems that the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary administrators (group 3) placed a higher relative degree of importance on critical task number two than did either of the other two groups of school personnel.

TABLE 3

Critical Task No. 3: Knowledge of District Personnel Policies and Performance Standards (20)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	32	12	13	57
I	87	103	65	255
H/VH	167	140	161	468
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 20.7 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.0005; therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. It appears that the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary adminstrators (group 3) placed a higher relative degree of importance on critical task number three than did either of the other two groups of school personnel.

TABLE 4

Critical Task No. 4: Knowledge of District Curriculum (19)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	24	28	6	58
I	79	83	65	227
H/VH	183	144	168	495
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 17.74 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.0013; therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. It seems that the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary administrators (group 3) placed a higher relative degree of importance on critical task number four than did either of the other two groups of school personnel.

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TABLE 5

Critical Task No. 5: Knowledge of Content and Skills Areas (6)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	3	3	2	8
I	40	12	22	74
H/VH	243	240	215	698
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 13.68 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.0084; therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. It seems that the special area, secondary, post-secondary cooperating teachers, and student teachers (group 2) placed a higher relative degree of importance on critical task number five than did either of the other two groups of school personnel.

TABLE 6

Critical Task No. 6: Knowledge of Learning Resources (15)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	12	6	4	22
I	78	73	62	213
H/VH	196	176	173	545
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 3.87 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.4237; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number six.

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TABLE 7

Critical Task No. 7: Knowledge of Learning and Learning Processes (9)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	8	7	5	20
I	50	45	16	111
H/VH	228	203	218	649
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 16.71 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.1122; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number seven.

TABLE 8

Critical Task No. 8: Knowledge of Students (2)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	5	6	4	15
I	17	25	12	54
H/VH	264	224	223	711
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 5.54 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.2364; therefore the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number eight.

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TABLE 9

Critical Task No. 9: Use of Curriculum Planning and Development Strategies (14)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	17	15	9	41
I	63	62	57	182
H/VH	206	178	163	557
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 2.35 (df=4) obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.6724; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number nine.

TABLE 10

Critical Task No. 10: Use of Assessing/Diagnosing Strategies (13)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	7	13	5	25
I	38	60	47	145
H/VH	241	182	187	610
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 14.97 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.0048; therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. It appears that the early childhood, elementary, special education, middle school cooperating teachers, and student teachers (group 1) placed a higher relative degree of importance on critical task number 10 than did either of the other two groups of school personnel.

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TABLE 11

Critical Task No. 11: Use of Instructional Planning Strategies (10)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	5	7	4	16
I	35	59	37	131
H/VH	246	189	198	633
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 13.25 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.0101; therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. It seems that the early childhood, elementary, special education, middle school cooperating teachers, and student teachers (group 1) placed a higher relative degree of importance on critical task number 11 than did either of the other two groups of school personnel.

TABLE 12

Critical Task No. 12: Use of Instructional Strategies (8)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	6	7	6	18
I	23	36	27	86
H/VH	257	212	207	676
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 5.55 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.2351; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number 12.

16

TABLE 13

Critical Task No. 13: Use of Management/Discipline Strategies (1)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	4	5	4	13
I	7	20	16	43
H/VH	275	230	219	724
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 8.82 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.0659; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number 13.

TABLE 14

Critical Task No. 14: Use of Supervision Strategies (11)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	6	5	4	15
I	49	48	41	138
H/VH	231	202	194	627
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 0.47 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.9768; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number 14.

17

TABLE 15

Critica Task No. 15: Use of Assessing/Evaluating Strategies (17)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	9	11	6	26
I	89	84	57	230
H/VH	188	160	176	524
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 7.44 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.1146; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number 15.

TABLE 16

Critical Task No. 16: Use of Communication Strategies (7)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	4	5	4	13
I	41	31	17	89
H/VH	241	219	218	679
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 7.16 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.1275; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number 16.

18

TABLE 17

Critical Task No. 17: Maintenance of a Positive Learning Environment (3)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	6	5	4	15
I	21	23	11	55
H/VH	259	227	224	710
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 3.90 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.4192; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number 17.

TABLE 18

Critical Task No. 18: Use of Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Strategies (16)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	12	11	5	28
I	88	81	64	233
H/VH	186	163	170	519
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 4.42 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.3518; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number 18.

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TABLE 19

Criticial Task No. 19: Use of Human Relations Strategies (5)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	6	6	5	17
I	23	35	16	74
H/VH	257	214	218	689
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 8.34 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.0800; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance each placed on critical task number 19.

TABLE 20

Critical Task No. 20: Use of Multicultural Education Strategies (22)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	26	31	16	73
I	91	104	90	285
H/VH	169	120	133	422
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 10.81 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.0298; therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. It appears that the early childhood, elementary, special education, middle school cooperating teachers, and student teachers (group 1) placed a higher relative degree of importance on critical task number 20 than did either of the other two groups of school personnel.

20

TABLE 21

Critical Task No. 21: Occupational Responsibilities (18)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	14	14	7	35
I	74	91	86	251
H/VH	198	150	146	494
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 10.13 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.0383; therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. It seems that the early childhood, elementary, special education, middle school cooperating teachers, and student teachers (group 1) placed a higher relative degree of importance on critical task number 21 than did either of the other two groups of school personnel.

TABLE 22

Critical Task No. 22: Assessment of Continuing Professional Development (12)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	7	7	4	18
I	47	50	57	154
H/VH	232	198	178	808
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 5.02 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.2850; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number 22.

TABLE 23

Critical Task No. 23: Professional Characteristics and Personal Qualities (4)

Scale	Group 1	2	3	Totals
VL/L	5	5	4	14
I	20	21	23	64
H/VH	261	229	212	702
Totals	286	255	239	780

A chi-square value of 1.26 (df=4) was obtained from these data. The probability of obtaining a chi-square value this large by chance is 0.8698; therefore, the hypothesis is retained. There is no difference among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on critical task number 23.

TABLE 24

CRITICAL TASKS INFLUENCED BY GROUP ONE

Number	Critical Task	Probability	Group	Percentages VL/L	I	H/VH
10	Use of Assessing/Diagnosing Strategies	0.0048	1	2.45	13.29	84.26
			2 & 3	3.64	21.66	74.70
11	Use of Instructional Planning Strategies	0.0101	1	1.75	12.24	86.01
			2 & 3	2.23	19.43	78.34
20	Use of Multicultural Education Strategies	0.0298	1	9.09	31.82	59.09
			2 & 3	9.51	39.27	51.22
21	Occupational Responsibilities	0.0383	1	4.90	25.87	69.23
			2 & 3	4.25	35.83	59.92

22

Early childhood, elementary, special education, middle school cooperating teachers, and student teachers placed a high or very high relative degree of importance on critical tasks 10, 11, 20 and 21. The hypothesis was rejected for each of these four critical tasks due primarily to the influence of group one.

TABLE 25

CRITICAL TASKS INFLUENCED BY GROUP TWO

Number	Critical Task	Probability	Group	Percentages VL/L	I	H/VH
5	Knowledge of Content and Skills Areas	0.0048	2	1.18	4.71	94.11
			1 & 3	0.95	11.81	87.24

Special area, secondary, post-secondary cooperating teachers, and student teachers placed a high or very high relative degree of importance on critical task five. The hypothesis was rejected for critical task five due primarily to the influence of group two.

TABLE 26

CRITICAL TASKS INFLUENCED BY GROUP THREE

Number	Critical Task	Probability	Group	Percentages VL/L	I	H/VH
1	Knowledge of District Educational Philosophy and Instructional Policies	0.0001	3	6.69	32.22	61.09
			1 & 2	15.16	42.33	42.51
2	Knowledge of District Instructional Goals and Objectives	0.0008	3	4.18	30.13	65.69
			1 & 2	9.43	37.89	52.68
3	Knowledge of District Personnel Policies and Performance Standards	0.0005	3	5.44	27.20	67.36
			1 & 2	8.13	35.12	56.75
4	Knowledge of District Curriculum	0.0013	3	2.51	27.20	70.29
			1 & 2	9.62	29.94	60.44

Elementary, secondary, and post-secondary administrators placed a high or very high relative degree of importance on critical tasks 1, 2, 3 and 4. The hypothesis was rejected for each of these four critical tasks due primarily to the influence of group three.

CONCLUSIONS

The focus of this study was two-fold: 1) to isolate general categories of critical tasks perceived to be the most important by school personnel and 2) to determine if groups of school personnel placed the same relative degree of importance on each of the 23 critical tasks for the purpose of evaluating student teaching.

Based on the findings, these conclusions appear to emerge:

1. There was considerable consistency among the three groups of school personnel with respect to the relative degree of importance they placed on each of the 23 critical tasks.

2. Early childhood, elementary, special education, middle school cooperating teachers, and student teachers (group one) seemed to place a higher degree of importance on: assessing/diagnosing strategies, instructional planning strategies, multicultural education strategies, and occupational responsibilities. The hypotheses for critical tasks, 10, 11, 20 and 21 were rejected because of the ratings of this group of school personnel. These four critical tasks appeared to be influenced most by group one.

3. Special area, secondary, post-secondary cooperating teachers, and student teachers (group two) seemed to place a higher relative degree of importance on: knowledge of content and skill areas. The hypothesis for critical task five was rejected because of the ratings of this group of school personnel. Critical task five appeared to be influenced most by group two.

4. Elementary, secondary, and post-secondary administrators (group three) appeared to place a higher relative degree of importance on: knowledge of educational philosophy and instructional policies, knowledge of instructional goals and objectives, knowledge of district personnel policies and performance, and knowledge of district curriculum. The hypotheses for critical tasks 1, 2, 3 and 4 were rejected because of the ratings of this group of school personnel. These four critical tasks seemed to be influenced most by group three.

5. The hypotheses for critical task 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22 and 23 were retained. Knowledge of learning resources, knowledge of learning and learning processes, knowledge of students, knowledge of curriculum planning and development, use of instructional strategies, use of management/discipline strategies, use of supervision strategies, use of assessing/evaluating strategies, use of communication strategies, maintenance of a positive learning environment, use of problem-solving/decision-making strategies, use of human relations strategies, assessment of continuing professional development, and professional characteristics/personal qualities appeared to be equally influenced by all three groups of school personnel.

6. In the judgment of the respondents, most of the critical tasks were perceived to have a very high or a high degree of importance for evaluating student teaching.

7. Cooperating teachers and student teachers (groups one and two combined) appeared to place a higher relative degree of importance on instruction and instruction-related tasks.

8. Cooperating teachers and student teachers (groups one and two combined) seemed to place a higher degree of importance on affective and cognitive tasks.

9. Administrators seemed to place a higher degree of importance on non-instructional tasks.

IMPLICATIONS

Teacher educators responsible for the evaluation of student teaching may wish to construct an instrument that includes one or more of the critical tasks isolated in this study.

The finding of this study might be useful to teacher education institutions for the purpose of examining and restructuring selected components of their teacher education program.

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